(iii) Encouraging machine stitching of bags.

(iv) Double line machine stitching of bags.

(v) Installation of weigh bridges.

(vi) Administrative measures such as tightening of security at depots, intensifying surprise check, ensuring regular stock verification etc.

(vii) Induction of CISF at vulnerable depots to curb theft and pilferage.

(viii) Not to place godowns under the charge of officials whose antecedents are doubtful.

(ix) Streamlining procedure and documentation for prompt investigation and fixing responsibility Inspection of depots by Senior Regional Manager and District Managers.

(x) Speed up of write off cases and fixation of responsibility wherever called for.

(xi) Inspection of depots by Senior Regional Manager and District Managers.

Post Harvest Losses

3368. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of post harvest losses in Punjab, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh during the years 1997, 1998 and 1999;

(b) whether any efforts have been made to identify the causes;

(c) if so, the remedial action taken in this regard; and

(d) if not, whether it is possible to indicate the date for preparing an action plan for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) The State-wise exact quantum of foodgrain losses during post harvest period at farm level due to insects, rodents, moisture, birds, micro-organisms, etc. including State of Punjab, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh is not known. However, a Committee headed by Dr. V.G. Panse, in its report submitted in 1968 had estimated annual post harvest losses in the foodgrains in various stages at 9.33%. These included losses during threshing

(1.68%), transportation (0.15%), processing (0.92%), rodents (2.50%), birds (0.85%), insects (2.55%) and moisture (0.68%). A survey conducted by Directorate of Marketing and Inspection, Government of India, during 1973-74, had estimated post harvest losses in foodgrains to be about 5% out of which the storage losses were estimated at about 2.7%.

(c) and (d) In order to reduce losses to foodgrains during the post harvest period, the Government of India is operating the Save Grain Campaign (SGC) scheme since 1969-70. The main thrust of activities of this scheme are training, demonstration and publicity in the field of scientific storage of foodgrains at the farm level. Improvement of grain storage structures and popularization of scientific storage structures like metal bins, pucca kothies and RCC ring bins and other activities are also carried out by 17 SGC offices for the benefit of farmers.

Decline in sugar exports

3369. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether sugar exports have suffered as exports were little over 4 lakh tonne since September, 2000;

(b) if so, whether the main cause is the cost of production being over Rs. 13,500 per tonne and the export prices are less;

(c) if so, whether a large quantity of sugar stocks are at present in the country and there is no market for its exports;

(d) if so, the reasons for the same; and

(e) what are the steps being considered by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) to (e) As per the latest available information from the trade circles, beginning October, 2000 till 23.07.2001, a quantity of 8.11 lakh tonnes (Provisional) of sugar has been physically exported. The exports are continuing.

Due to high level of production of sugar during the 3 consecutive sugar seasons, namely, 1998-99, 1999-2000, and 2000-2001, the level of sugar stocks held be the sugar factories has increased. The efforts are being